

# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

No. 98

AUGUST, 1929.

Price 4d.

## THE LABOUR PARTY CONSTITUTION

### THE COMING CONFERENCE AMENDMENTS.

As intimated in our last issue the coming Conference of the Labour Party will be asked to deal with a revised Constitution and Standing Orders together with new model rules for constituency and Local Parties.

The present constitution has been in operation some eleven years — not an unfair test of the wisdom and expediency of its general provisions. It might well be said of the present constitution that its adoption signalised the attainment by the Party of its adult age. The growth since has been remarkable, but it is not surprising that experience has shown that a revision of the rules has become necessary.

The proposals with which the Conference at Brighton will be called upon to deal are by no means so revolutionary in their effect as the changes that were made in 1918. In fact, with perhaps one exception, no radical change at all is proposed and the alterations imply principally a codification and assimilation of Conference decisions upon the rules, and a filling in of necessary details here and there to meet the needs of natural growth.

The most important alterations are to be found in clause 2 of the Constitution concerning membership and in the new clause governing conditions of membership. The new Constitution proposes that there shall be three classes of membership, *i.e.*, (a) affiliated members, (b) individual members, (c) national associate members. The latter innovation is to permit of the enrolment by the National E.C. of direct members of the Party. It is probable that the pros and cons of this proposal will be hotly debated at the Conference.

There is to be in future a much clearer indication of the bodies entitled to national affiliation. These will include Trade Unions, recognised by the T.U.C., Co-operative Societies, Socialist Societies, professional organisations which, in the opinion of the

National Executive, have interests consistent with the other affiliated organisations, together with constituency Labour Parties and Central Labour Parties in Divided Boroughs. The age for individual members is to be not less than sixteen years. One of the Liverpool resolutions is embodied in the proviso that individual members shall not be members of political parties (or organisations ancillary or subsidiary thereto) declared by the Annual Conference or the national E.C. to be ineligible for affiliation to the Party.

Similar discipline is imposed by the conditions of membership for affiliated organisations who are required (a) to accept the programme, principles and policy of the Party; (b) to agree to conform to the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Party and (c) to submit their political rules to the National E.C. These are healthy provisions necessary to the cohesion and purpose of the Party, and though we imagine there will be some resistance the Conference may be expected to signify its assent with a heavy majority.

An individual member must, as at present, if eligible, be a member of a Trades Union. The new Constitution, however, wisely adds the words "recognised by the General Council of the T.U.C." There is a further stipulation, the effect of which is to confine the membership of an individual to the constituency Party where he or she resides or is registered as an elector. Such limitation is not to apply to the proposed national associate members.

No change is made in the Party objects. In the clause dealing with the Party programme some verbal alterations are made, which make for clarity and directness.

An alteration of the representation to the Party Conference which we suspect will meet with some resistance is a proposed reduction of the basis on which delegates may be appointed. It is proposed that in future affiliated

organisations shall send but one delegate for each five thousand members instead of one delegate for each thousand members as at present. As a corollary constituency Labour Parties will be limited to one delegate for each five thousand individual members or part thereof and the privilege of sending an additional woman delegate will only apply where the individual and affiliated women's membership combined exceeds two thousand five hundred. The ex-officio membership of the Party Conference consisting of the National E.C., the Parliamentary Labour Party and Parliamentary candidates remains unaltered, but it must be remembered that these have no vote unless duly appointed as delegates.

A new clause in the Constitution lays down the conditions for the appointment of delegates to the Party Conference, but the only new principle introduced is that Labour M.P.s and candidates may be appointed as delegates by their Party (which is not the case at present), unless such persons are resident or have a place of residence in the constituency. But we are not sure that the operation of this rule, though to the convenience of candidates, will encourage Local Parties to a greater interest in National Party affairs.

In the clause dealing with the National Executive Committee we note that in future the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party is to be ex-officio a member of the National Executive. Does this indicate shortly a change in the Treasurership of the Party? The National E.C. also now take express power regarding adjudication in disputes.

Parliamentary candidatures at By-elections come in for attention in Clause 9 and a new rule is introduced by which the conduct of the campaign in such elections will be brought more into harmony with the prevalent view that a By-election is a national event, and not one of purely local concern.

The Conference will probably witness an exciting debate on the proposal to raise the present affiliation fee from threepence to fourpence per member (from twopence to fourpence per member in the cause of individual members) with a minimum of £3 per annum for Divisional and Central Labour Parties. National associate members are to pay not less than £1 1s. od. An interesting proposal is that the national

affiliation fee for individual members is to be paid by the purchase of membership cards supplied by the National E.C. to constituency and local parties at fourpence per card.

The new draft Standing Orders of the Party also contain a few alterations of importance. The present rule, which has been broken for several years, stipulates that the Annual Conference shall be held in June. The new S.O. practically fixes the Conference for the end of September or beginning of October.

An alteration is to take place in the basis of election to the National E.C. In future the National E.C. will consist of four Divisions:—

1. Twelve members nominated by Trades Unions.
2. One member nominated by Socialist, Co-operative and Professional Organisations. This is a restoration in part of a practice which formerly existed.
3. Five members nominated by Constituency and Central Labour Parties.
4. Five women members. This is an increase of one woman member.

It is interesting to note that the proposal by which the delegates of constituency Parties should elect their own representatives, with which the name of Mr. Herbert Morrison was once prominently associated, finds no part in the changes to be made at the Conference over which he will preside. Neither do the women get the change some of them have agitated for similarly applying to the election of women E.C. members.

Our readers will remember that in addition to the national constitution new model rules are to be submitted for constituency and Local Labour Parties.

## PENCILS!!!

Ah! the very thing. Advertise coming events profitably. Pencils with special imprints for Bazaars, Election and Branch Funds—for samples (2d.) write

**SIMON BIRKBECK, Keswick**



ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

# The "L.O." Guide to Local Government Elections

## PART 1—BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS (*continued*)

### FINDING FIT CANDIDATES.

The procurement of municipal candidates almost invariably presents a difficult problem both as regards quantity and quality. The ideal candidate is a person in whom the civic spirit is strongly developed, and who can devote time and ability to the work. In some of the larger Boroughs a Town Councillorship demands tremendous inroads on the Councillor's time and in addition the nature of the undertakings, of which he is practically a director, require in him a degree of business acumen not always met with. Adaptability and sound commonsense will be more in demand however than actual experience of big business. On most Councils the new Councillor serves an apprenticeship on minor Committees before he is appointed to the more responsible Committees and the "compleat Councillor" is therefore more a creation than a discovery.

The propagandist is not in his element on a Town Council. When representation is weak, however, his presence may be justified for then criticism is in demand rather than constructive ability.

But because the perfect Councillor is largely the product of experience there is much to be said for educating candidates in the work of Borough Councils and making them familiar with the functions they will perform. Every candidate should possess a general knowledge of the working of English local government. This is quite simply obtained and everything necessary is contained in the Local Government Handbook compiled by the Joint Research and Information Department of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. No candidate should be taken seriously who is not able to

master the rudiments of this book, for it is both elementary and explanatory. Candidates who desire to amplify their knowledge will find a Ruskin College Study Course available. The studiously-minded person will find, too, that there is an ample bibliography.

But the average candidate, who may read only the handbook, requires in addition a first-hand acquaintance with Council business. This is best obtained by attendance at Council meetings and at the group meetings of Town Councillors. The *Labour Organiser* has consistently advocated the formation of Labour groups on public bodies and the discussion of Council business and decisions on questions of policy by these groups.

Taking the long view, Party interests are immeasurably advanced if all prospective candidates are permitted to attend the meetings of the group even if they exercise no vote in the decisions taken. The adoption of this plan gives to the new candidates a great electioneering advantage, and in addition the assimilation of new Councillors presents less difficulty for they are earlier able to take part in discussions and intelligently vote on the problems presented.

### THE PROCESS OF SELECTION.

The selection of candidates should not be left until the Municipal Elections are imminent. Under Party rules selection is a matter which is solely the concern of the local Party catering for the Municipal Borough in association with its ward committees. The Divisional Party in a County Division does not enter into the matter. In Divided Boroughs the selection of candidates is again a matter for local choice, but the Borough Labour Party and Divisional

Labour Parties each have a standing in the matter which can be justified in the interests of maintaining a common policy.

Without here going into details of Labour Party rules, it can be said that affiliated societies and individual men's and women's sections, each have the right of putting forward the names of persons for selection as candidates. Labour Party rules apparently contemplate local initiative in every case, but practice and the experience of a deficiency of candidates has developed a process of initiative, not mentioned in the rules, for which much is to be said. This is the formation by the central body of a panel of candidates towards the compilation of which co-operation is sought from all the interested organisations and persons.

The earlier the candidates' panel is compiled the better. The national panel for Parliamentary purposes should be taken as a model. Encouragement should be given to affiliated organisations and the sections to send in names of suitable candidates and the panel so formed should be brought before the ward committees responsible for selection. As in the national model some candidates may carry financial backing with them. Wherever practicable, persons on the candidates' panel should be given opportunities of attending Councillors' group meetings as above suggested. The advantages of the panel are that it tends to secure a greater number of candidates, allocations of candidates to suitable wards are more easily arranged, and selection is facilitated should a By-election take place.

### NOMINATIONS.

The procedure at nominations in a Municipal Election radically differs from nominations at a Parliamentary election.

We have already seen that where a person is elected for more than one ward he may only sit for one, and it follows that a person may be nominated for all or any of the wards in which there are contests.

Elections will ordinarily occur for a third of the Councillors in each ward, on the 1st November in each year. The elections will be postponed to the next or next succeeding day if the day of election would fall on a Sunday or a day appointed for a public fast,

humiliation or thanksgiving.\* At a casual vacancy, as we have noted, the election is to be held within fourteen days after notice in writing of the vacancy has been given to the Mayor or Town Clerk, by two local government electors.

Both in the case of a casual vacancy and at the ordinary elections the Town

---

\*In the expressions of time here used Sundays, etc., must be counted. The "day of election" must be taken to be, for ordinary elections, the first of November, notwithstanding that the poll is postponed (when the 1st is a Sunday) till the following day.

Owing to differences of calculation the expressions of time used in certain Acts are liable to be confused. Thus, in the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Acts, both of 1883 and 1884, calculations are made in the ordinary manner counting Sundays, fast days, etc., and all others. Under the Ballot Act "Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday, and any day set apart for a public fast or public thanksgiving" are all excluded from the calculations. For the purposes of Municipal elections this provision is of effect only as regards the appointment of polling agents, e.g., if polling is on a Monday notification of the appointment of polling agents must be given on the Friday, not on the Saturday.

The Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, gives a complicated calculation of its own, and one which has given rise to some doubts. We have given in the first paragraph to this note the generally accepted method of calculating the dates referred to in this article. There are, of course, other dates with which we are not concerned to which doubt applies.

An interesting illustration of the differences to which we have referred may be given here. A Parliamentary poll may take place on a Bank Holiday. A Municipal Election may not take place on any of the days above-mentioned, or on a day of "public humiliation" or a Monday or Tuesday in Easter week, though there is nothing to prevent a poll on any other Bank Holiday. A Rural or Parish Council election cannot be taken on any Bank Holiday though otherwise the calculation for Municipal Elections will apply.



Clerk is required to publish a notice announcing the day of election and nine clear days must elapse between the publication of the notice and the day of election. The notice is sufficient if fixed on the Town Hall in Boroughs where there are no wards, and where there are wards the notice is sufficient if fixed on the Town Hall and "in some conspicuous place" in the ward.

Nominations are to be sent in *seven days at least* before the day of election and before 5 o'clock in the afternoon of the last day for delivery. Here we may emphasise the unsatisfactory nature of the provisions for filling casual vacancies. A casual vacancy may arise from causes quite unknown to the public at large, yet any two electors may precipitate the election by privily giving notice to the Mayor or Town Clerk. The election must then take place within fourteen days. Actually the Mayor may only allow nine clear days. But as nominations must be delivered seven clear days before the election (and before 5 o'clock on the last day), it is quite possible for the notice on the Town Hall to be entirely overlooked for the forty-eight hours or so available for action—and this brief period may actually include a Sunday.

It is the business of the Town Clerk to provide nomination papers and to supply any local government elector with same. The Town Clerk also must, if required, fill up the nomination paper.

The nomination paper is to be subscribed by two local government electors as proposer and seconder and eight other L.G. electors; the electors must be registered for the ward to which the nomination applies in the case of a ward election. In the case of a Borough not divided into wards, the electors may be registered anywhere in the Borough and they may subscribe to as many nomination papers as there are vacancies to be filled.

The nomination paper is required to state the surname and christian name of the candidate together with his abode and description. The candidate's place of business will not be sufficient, for place of abode means residence.

No express hours are fixed for the reception of nomination papers at the Town Clerk's office. The nominations may, in fact, be delivered at any time after the notice of election has been

given and before the seven days mentioned above. Papers must, however, be handed in at the Town Clerk's office by the candidate, his proposer or seconder. It is the business of the Town Clerk to send a notice of nomination to each candidate.

The nomination of a person out of the United Kingdom is bad unless the written consent of such person, given within a month of his nomination, is produced *at the time of nomination*, and this consent must be duly attested by two witnesses.

Where the number of nominations exceed the vacancies to be filled a ballot will duly take place. Where the nominations equal the vacancies the persons nominated will be declared elected. If the number of nominations is less than the vacancies to be filled (a very rare occurrence) those nominated are declared elected and retiring Councillors are deemed re-elected to fill the remaining places.

At least four days before the day of election the Town Clerk must publish the names of the candidates nominated, with, of course, their proper descriptions and the names of the proposers and seconders. The publication may take place in the same manner as prescribed for the notice of the election.

In the supplement to these articles will be found a form of nomination paper duly filled according to instructions.

## WITHDRAWALS & OBJECTIONS.

Withdrawals are permissible up to 2 o'clock of the day after the last day for delivery of nomination papers, *i.e.*, up to the time which the Mayor may fix for objections. Withdrawals, however, may only take place if there are sufficient nominations to fill the vacancies, and if that is not the case the candidate must stand by his nomination and he will be duly declared elected. If he still desires to retire he will be required to pay the fine for resignation.

The day following the last day for delivery of nomination papers the Mayor is required to attend at the Town Hall for the purpose of deciding on the validity of objections. He must attend "for a sufficient time between the hours of two and four" but this does not necessarily mean that the

whole time will be open for objections, and in fact a Mayor unaware that any objections were forthcoming would be entitled to close the proceedings after a reasonable time had elapsed.

As in the case of a Parliamentary Election the procedure for objections is not altogether satisfactory, and it is noteworthy that in later legislation, *i.e.*, that establishing Rural and District Councils and Metropolitan Borough Councils there is no provision at all for objections.

At the proceedings for objections each candidate may be accompanied by a "representative," appointed by himself, but the proposer, seconder and assentors have no right to be present. Either the candidates or their representatives have the right of objection to the nomination papers of the other candidates, but it is by no means clear on what grounds objection may be taken. The Mayor apparently has no right to reject a paper on the ground that the person proposed is disqualified. His jurisdiction appears to be limited to the form of nomination paper itself or to the extent to which delivery of the paper has complied with the rules.

*(To be continued.)*

The Preston By-election was marked by the output of some excellent literature. The election address itself was nicely got up on toned paper in the form of an 8 pp. booklet, nicely filling a foolscap envelope. The autograph letter—always effective—found its place in the campaign in a reproduction of a letter from the Rt. Hon. Tom Shaw, M.P., to his new colleague; and quite rightly the letter from the Prime Minister to Sir W. Jowitt was reproduced in almost as effective imitation typewriting print. The election agent was Coun. W. E. Morris, to whom we extend our congratulations.

Four recent copies of the *Walton Herald* have reached us. This is a gratis Labour newspaper of unusual form. It is a 12 pp. quarto magazine of which a minimum of 10,000 copies is guaranteed a house to house distribution. We note that there were 20,000 of the election number. Congratulations to our Walton friends.

## *D. Gestetner's* Duplicators

did yeoman service for the Labour Cause in many constituencies during the election. On the whole we have not favoured the use of duplicated handbills for announcements of meetings, but we have recommended duplicated matter for the personal letter and with office stationery, or for the issue of emergency stuff which must be got out secretly and rapidly. But a sample of excellent illustrated handbills which has reached us from Hanley somewhat modifies our opinion. The Gestetner here has been put to really fine use and a varied batch of bills illustrated with some telling sketches proves once again, not only the adaptability of the duplicator, but that handbills can be got from it both varied and attractive in design.—(*Extract from "Labour Organiser," July, 1929.*)

*Ask for details of our  
HIRE PURCHASE TERMS*

*D. Gestetner Ltd*

DEPARTMENT "L"

37 Ludgate Hill, E. C. 4

Telephone: HOLBORN 0142  
(6 lines)



# THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH

By MAURICE L. HACKETT,  
Chairman National Advisory Com-  
mittee League of Youth.

As District Conferences are about to be called in various parts of the country to stimulate interest in the development of the League, this is an appropriate time to place before responsible Party Organisers information as to the aims and objects of the League.

The party Executive have realised what I hope will also appeal to local organisations. We have, as a Party, machinery to deal with men (through Trade Unions and local parties) for the women (through the women's sections) and this still leaves a large and important section of the community, namely, those who have just received the vote and those that are to have it in the next few years.

The machinery to deal with the latter section is being extended and already shows results.

The principal object of the League is to provide local training centres for future workers in all branches of party activities and to give educational and social advantages to its members.

Unquestionably the coming years of Labour administration will be the better for stronger and more capable organisation in the constituencies, and we claim that the encouragement and help of Leagues of Youth (which are integral parts of Local Parties) will bring about the required result.

In forming Leagues, young people should be consulted on the preliminary measures and, if possible, allowed to carry them through. An appeal from youth to youth backed up by the candidate or other responsible person, brings about the best result, and at the first meeting for the election of officers, etc., the responsibility of the branch as part of the local movement should be stressed.

I would urge the "The Benefits of Experience" be offered carefully to Leagues rather than forced upon them. The occasional instances of lack of harmony between old and young organisations is, in my opinion, due to those who forget that they can remember what kind of outlook Youth has, whereas younger people find the greatest difficulty in looking at things from the angle of the fifty year old.

League of Youth members are those of the Party between sixteen and twenty-five (under the proposed new party rules) who desire to join up in the youth section. Their subscription to the party is already paid, or if not, would be handed over by the League upon receipt. The branch receives, if possible, a grant from the local executive to enable it to carry on until funds have been received from other sources, such as socials.

Overlapping is avoided by having two members of the Party Executive on the Junior Committee as observers and *vice versa*.

League activities include discussion groups and study circles, speakers' classes, canvassing in squads for the local party, help in the propaganda work, running dances, socials, rambles, choirs, dramatic clubs, etc.

We insist that social work is a secondary consideration, but it is necessary in order to attract new members and give the older ones an opportunity of meeting them.

A comprehensive pamphlet on League work and activity, embodying the constitution and model rules is being compiled and will be ready in September.

The total membership is about 20,000 in over 200 branches, and great strides in forming new branches have been made since the first National Conference held at Transport Hall, London, last January.

The most pessimistic critic of Youth organisations must at least admit that any political body with a live Youth register of thousands of members has also thousands of voters to call upon at the crucial moment and hundreds of workers to be used.

Our opponents have scored heavily by their admittedly large paper membership of their junior sections, and at the present time are spending hundreds of pounds on developing the Junior Imperial League and The Young Liberals Association.

The Labour Party League of Youth is a live political organisation claiming a high percentage of active workers.

(Concluded on Page 160.)



## QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE

### Unauthorised Expenses.

*Question.* I shall be glad if you will deal with the following queries, either by post or, if possible, in your next issue of the *Labour Organiser* :—

- (1) If unauthorised persons or bodies, within the Electoral Division, incur expenditure, without the knowledge or authority of the agent, what course should be taken :
  - (a) To enable this expenditure (if possible) to be incorporated in the return.
  - (b) To prevent these persons or bodies doing the same in the future?
  - (c) What is in your opinion the best course to take under these circumstances?
  - (d) What are the legal penalties?
- (2) If the same or any other unauthorised persons or bodies display posters which do not contain the name of the printers or publishers, what are the legal penalties—
  - (a) If the candidate is elected?
  - (b) If he is not elected?
- (3) Is there a limited time beyond which legal proceedings (arising from actions of the above type) cannot be taken, if so, give particulars as to dates?

*Answer.* We are afraid our correspondent must be content with somewhat incomplete answers to this set of questions, for most of the problems raised have been dealt with in previous articles in the *Labour Organiser*. We prefer also to answer questions on specific information and there are a number of questions we ourselves would like to ask before we could be sure that each point is being met. For instance, are we to assume that the persons who have "incurred expenditure" have also paid the bills, and that these bills are not included in the return and declaration of expenses?

And what are the items, and are they considerable or petty, for petty expenditure is not illegal.

However, we will do our best to answer the questions in a general statement. It is an illegal practice under the C.I.P.P.A., 1883, for any unauthorised person to make any payment of election expenses (other than small unrefunded petty payments or the candidate's personal expenses) except through the election agent, and it is a corrupt practice under the Representation of the People Act, 1918, for any person other than the election agent to incur any expenses on account of holding public meetings or issuing advertisements, circulars or publications for the purpose of promoting or procuring the return of any candidate at a Parliamentary Election.

Our friend does not indicate whether the expenditure incurred has been made by some misguided supporter, a hostile organisation or by one of those bodies who seek to influence the election of one of the candidates who favour their particular views. Every tactful election agent would seek to nip an evil in the bud, and he would by publications and warnings do everything in his power to make known the fact that unauthorised expenditure is a serious and punishable offence. As to the penalties for an illegal or corrupt practice these may include a heavy fine or imprisonment and disenfranchisement.

With regard to the publication of posters without the printers' imprint any person, whether authorised or not, is liable for this offence to a fine not exceeding £100. Provided the person so offending is not the candidate or election agent, the candidate's return, if elected, is not affected.

As to the third question the time limit for a prosecution ordinarily is one year and proceedings must be com-



menced within a year after the offence is committed. If an election petition is involved prosecution may take place at a later date but no later than two years.

### Individualising Duplicated Circulars.

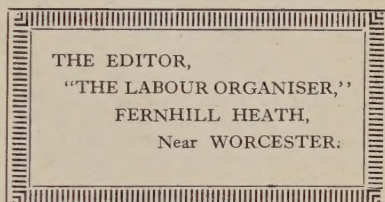
**Question.** Our Party is frequently sending out duplicated circulars to members and supporters and frequently we use our Gestetner for extensive circularising to the electors. I often think it would be more effective if the circulars contained the names and addresses of the recipients. Do you know any simple method of getting this done? It would of course be better if the name and address was actually like the body of the circular, because each person then would think the letter was specially written for him.

**Answer.** Where general circularisation is taking place we do not know of any simpler or quicker method than to pass each circular through the typewriter, care being taken to use a ribbon of the same colour as the duplicator ink. This is, of course, a laborious task where a large number are involved, yet we know of some instances at the recent election where each elector received a personally addressed circular.

Where circularisation to the same individuals is meant there is nothing better than an addressing machine, one of which is used in the office of the *Labour Organiser*. Plates are made of the names and addresses of persons to whom communications are frequently sent, and the plates are stored much in the manner of a card index. While the plates are ordinarily used for addressing envelopes it takes very little longer to run the whole of the batch of circulars through the addressing machine, so giving each one a personal touch.

If the expenditure on a machine is out of the question (and they are purchasable from £5 upwards) there are one or two other methods that may answer. Some of the duplicator firms will supply suitably-sized stencils of names and addresses and the stencils are then applied to the duplicators and rolled with a small roller as a separate job. This is tedious but the effect is there, and there is the advantage that the appearance of the whole letter is exactly the same. We know of one secretary who types a

number of addresses on an ordinary indestructible stencil, afterwards cutting the stencil into suitably-sized slips each containing one name. Usually these slips are about 3½ ins. by 2 ins. and they are mounted on a small frame made of thin strawboard, from which the centre has been cut away in the manner shown below.



If the stencils are properly secured it is possible to manipulate them fairly rapidly with a small roller. In order to keep the margin correct it is an advantage to get the pile of circulars flush against an upright wooden surface on the left-hand side. If the name cards have been neatly cut this will act as a register for each card and avoid the names being duplicated out of the horizontal.

### *Let the* **BLACKFRIARS PRESS** *help you!*

We can help you. Give us the chance to prove to you that for good printing, at reasonable prices and with quick despatch, Labour can hold its own in trade as well as in politics. Send us your enquiries.

THE  
**BLACKFRIARS PRESS Ltd.**  
SMITH-DORRIEN ROAD,  
LEICESTER

Phone 27164 . W. Borrett, Manager

# LINKING UP LOCAL UNITS

## HOW CO. DURHAM'S FEDERATION WORKS.

By J. W. FOSTER,  
*Secretary Durham Federation of Labour  
 Parties and Labour Agent, Durham  
 and Sedgfield.*

[In the following article, Mr. J. W. Foster, whose fine work in Durham County is so well known, places his finger on two present weaknesses in Labour's local organisation, and the illustration he gives showing how contact is kept between local parties in Co. Durham, and common policy and action evolved, will be read with interest by our readers.]

As the years roll by, bringing with them an increasing number of Labour majorities on Parish, District, Urban, and County Councils, new problems of organisation present themselves for solution and Agents are occasionally called upon to face the necessity of socialising these new forces of our Labour Movement.

It is obvious that these Labour Groups of majorities, and minorities, must play an important part, for good or for ill, in the future welfare of our party. They are an integral part of our movement; we require their help and inspiration to assist in keeping the movement virile. What is the relationship of such groups of Labour members on our Local Government Authorities to the Local Labour Party, or the Divisional Labour Party? Are we satisfied that they are properly organised to obtain, and give, the best results?

It is not enough that Labour Groups should jog along in any ramshackle fashion almost without any definite aim or policy on anything. Such groups, without policy or organisation, must prove a nuisance and are merely parasites. The work of a Labour Group, even if in a minority, should be easily distinguished, and be an asset to the work of the Local Labour Party. I am aware that the Rules of many Divisional or Local Labour Parties provide that Labour members of each Council shall form a group and meet as occasion requires to determine their policy, and to act together on all matters of principle, also that there is mutual representation between such groups and the Local or Divisional Labour Parties.

But are we sure that from Division to Division we have a common understanding or interpretation on matters pertaining to Labour's Policy? Is it good business for the Socialist Movement to have Labour Groups in one Parliamentary Division pursuing a policy in contradiction to that of Labour Groups in other Divisions only some few miles away? Criticism of these matters cannot come within the scope of this journal, but I feel compelled to admit that too many Labour representatives on Local Authorities know less concerning the application of Socialist principles than our opponents know about applying Toryism. On the other hand I know of many Labour Groups with a set of rules to govern conduct and meet almost any emergency, who periodically meet and seriously discuss their business agenda and play the part of a good team in the council chamber.

I do not propose to discuss the internal working of a group here, but I do want to point out that where groups are well organised they have proved a tower of strength to their own Party.

But what of the relationship of Division with Division in matters of general interest concerning all? Do we pull together for common benefit?

Durham County, geographically, contains fourteen Rural Districts, fifteen Guardian Areas, twenty-six Urban Districts, seventy-four Electoral Divisions, four Municipal Boroughs, and six Parliamentary Boroughs. In numerous cases many of the boundaries of these Local Authorities are not coterminous with Parliamentary boundaries and a working and connecting link with all these areas is required in order to achieve some measure of unity of purpose. This has been recognised by the National Labour Party for some time in seeking to establish district or county federations. Such a federation exists for the most part of this county and was formed in 1918. It is known as the Durham County Federation of Divisional Labour Parties.



Of what use is this Federation? Like all institutions consisting of human beings I readily confess it has serious limitations. Nevertheless, its records show that its work is appreciated in no small way by those associated with it, and by many others who are outside our boundary. Let me briefly enumerate some of its functions in Local Government. When elections loom ahead it pushes the business in getting candidates ready in good time and gives every assistance possible in backward areas. Every effort is made to see that all candidates, for every class of election, are well informed. It has a definite detailed policy covering such matters as health, education, adult education, assessment, works, poor law, finance, transport and legislative reform. It also supplies a model election address for guidance. It convenes Conferences on special subjects, especially prior to elections, and arranges for recognised experts to address such gatherings, to which candidates are specially invited.

The Federation also arranges for a supply of national speakers during a campaign, and this is at the disposal of needy areas. The expenses are pooled which proves a great advantage to areas with limited resources. Moreover, during the month before the election, about thirty of our best informed speakers, including our women, are retained for use in the areas where we deem their services to be most required, travelling expenses only being charged. From experience we found that live secretaries, or agents, booked up all the best platform talent well ahead, whilst the backward areas, being slow to move, were somewhat left to starve. These areas make application for reserved speakers, and we allocate them speakers according to our estimate of their need. In this way pressure is brought to bear on the weakest spots of the Federation area in order to secure the best total result. This method is much appreciated by our reserved speakers; their correspondence is reduced, and their service used to the best advantage.

We prepare all necessary election literature and send samples to all Local Government candidates and their secretaries or agents with a price list of the same. Each area then orders their requirements direct from our printer, Mr. Thos. Summerbell, of Sunderland,

whose name and work is so well known to many agents. The work of the preparation of election material is perhaps the most difficult and responsible, and it is here that Labour Groups can be of great assistance and must play their part in the coming days. Information relating to the work and achievements of any of their departments, the results of any experiments, should be carefully tabulated by responsible officers of each group and sent forward in good time in order that it can be sifted and sorted; the essential facts can then be suitably prepared for general information, for the making of speakers' notes, pamphlets, and propaganda leaflets.

The Federation should be an information bureau and be able to advise on almost all matters concerning the work it has in hand. Apart from elections, it can secure information from the various areas to be made into suitable 'returns,' and when this has been done, it has, to a very large extent, been successful in welding the thought of groups and other organisations within the federation area into a unit for the purpose of securing a general agreed line of policy or administration. Its business meetings provide for resolutions from the Divisional Labour Parties, the interchange of ideas, and for mutual assistance. It encourages propaganda on Socialist subjects which are not generally accepted or understood. In a word, it seeks co-operation in the movement.

On the business side I may mention that the Divisional Labour Parties place their orders for conference reports with the federation and the quantity is then purchased at the cheaper rate. What about its representation? It has a president, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer, and two auditors. There are two delegates from each Divisional Labour Party, two from the Durham County Women's Advisory Council, two from the Durham County League of Youth, and two from the Durham County Council Labour Group. The work of its officers is purely VOLUNTARY. Each organisation is responsible for the travelling expenses of its delegates. For its finance each Divisional Labour Party pays an affiliation fee of 30s. per annum. Looking over the years, only on one occasion has the federation had a serious debt. The fee was doubled to parties having

a financing organisation to their candidate, and this was followed by a county appeal to all units of organisation which realised almost £200. To-day our bank balance is over £40.

It will be obvious that the work of such a federation, with its present constitution, would be impossible without the team spirit and loyal co-operation of the officers, the secretaries, and my fellow agents. We have inherited great traditions, and our slogan is "Durham Must Lead." Our Labour representation on authorities continues to grow and to-day we hold seventy-two seats out of ninety-nine on the Durham County Council, which provides a strong position in dealing with the coming Local Government changes in the spring, and to faithfully carry into operation the reforms we expect from the Labour Government for the benefit of our downtrodden people. There are also nearly 1,400 Labour representatives on various other Local Authorities within our federation area waiting to "deliver the goods." In the Parliamentary arena, a Labour M.P. sits for each of the eleven county divisions, while six out of the seven Borough seats are ours. With seventeen out of eighteen seats in Durham county we shall be happier when we secure the other one in making a contribution to a REAL Labour Government.

Now, Mr. Editor, you wrote me saying that "out of your fund of experience you are bound to have something worth saying to others." You are KING of the Agent's Castle, and, as a loyal subject I have tried to faithfully obey your kind command. Please do not assume that "everything in the garden is lovely." You know it is not. We need some more full-time agents for certain divisions in Durham and other counties. In these lines I have tried to suggest that problems of organisation must change with the development of the Party, and we all take off our hats to the part *The Labour Organiser* is playing under your capable leadership, in seeking to meet our varying needs.

**Back copies of our  
FEBRUARY NUMBER  
are still urgently required.**

**Send to  
The Editor.**

**Full Value  
Given.**

## SEASIDE CONSTITUENCIES.

### Some Suggestions of General Interest.

By Coun. W. McLAINE, B.Sc. (Econ.).

A type of constituency as difficult to win for Labour as the rural areas is the seaside resort. I was one of the Labour candidates for the double-membered constituency of Brighton and Hove, and our experience appears to have been the same as that of the candidates in similar towns as witness the figures for some such places:—

	Conservative Majority.	Labour Vote.
Brighton ...	27,021	19,000
Bournemouth	10,055	7,900
Torquay ...	5,353	4,770
Eastbourne ...	9,953	8,204
Blackpool ...	7,538	12,049
Southport ...	3,947	5,380

All these towns have a considerable number of residents who are retired people, who have made sufficient money to enable them to live in comfort for the rest of their days, and have gone to live by the sea. Large numbers of them have servants who appear to be under the domination of their masters and mistresses. Going over the register for Hove—one of the most "select" of seaside places—one found many houses with a Lieutenant-Colonel and his wife, and five servants living there. On polling day the servants came to the Hove Town Hall with the Conservative Poll Cards and voted according to the instructions on those cards. It is impossible to say whether they ever saw the Labour Election Address—it is certain that they did not attend the Labour meetings; for one thing they would have little time to do so, and for another their mistresses would be against their going.

Seaside resorts depend for their prosperity upon a well-paid working population outside their own boundaries. If there is much unemployment the first thing to be cut down is that little amount spent by working-class families on holidays and enjoyments. Similarly taxes placed on goods used in boarding houses and hotels means increased prices to the patrons of such places, and consequently a smaller number of people able to pay for the accommodation they provide.

A much greater effort however is needed before these places can be won for Labour, and in one respect they are



very favourably situated to receive help from other Local Labour Parties and Labour Party members.

Every year hundreds of thousands of active Labour workers take a few days' holidays by the sea. They go for a rest and do not desire to spend their time working for the movement. But with some organisation on the part of the Labour Parties in the seaside towns it should not be difficult to arrange for many of these Labour holiday makers to give one evening of their holidays to helping the movement. It should be possible to hold a meeting every evening with a different speaker for every one. At such meetings, a collection could be taken and the money set aside for the purchase of leaflets and literature for use in the town itself. A large proportion of those attending such meetings would of course be holiday makers, and would give a little to help—but the task of the Local Labour Party is not the conversion of the holiday makers but their own residents, and the leaflets and literature would assist in doing this. In particular as much as possible should be set aside to purchase leaflets addressed to domestic servants—so that they may be impressed with the idea that the ballot is secret, and that their political interests are not necessarily those of their masters and mistresses.

In addition to the above, some arrangements could be made which would help the Local Labour Parties and also help some of our propagandists. There are probably many good speakers and workers in the movement, who, because of short-time and unemployment are unable to afford a holiday, or who might be able to pay the fare but could not pay for their accommodation. Seaside Labour Parties could arrange at little cost to have the benefit of the services of such workers by providing them with reasonable accommodation in the homes of members in return for a week's engagement as speakers. They would be on duty in the evenings, and during the day could enjoy the amenities of the town and the beach.

Visitors to seaside places can also help. When they buy their *Daily Herald* on holiday they can insist upon the shopkeeper showing a *Herald* poster. If he refuses he can be informed,—gently but firmly—that no papers, books, or cigarettes will be

bought from him during the holiday-maker's stay in the town. If a good number of *Herald* readers do this, such a newsagent will realise that he is missing business and will mend his ways.

The Labour Party Conference will meet at Brighton this year, and it is to be hoped that delegates who favour any or all of the above suggestions will get into touch with the Brighton Local Labour Party while they are in the town and help a very hard working group of comrades to win a particularly reactionary town.

### OUR TRIP UP THE RHINE.

By M. and S. J. GEE (Concluded).

The next day being sunny and warm, we started to walk along the Neckar river bank, taking our lunch with us, and later on eating it beside the water's edge in the loveliest spot imaginable. We eventually reached Neckarsteinach and had some refreshments in a riverside café, being served by a good-looking young girl who said she was very pleased to serve us, as she could speak some quite good English. We crossed over and back again across two good bridges at different parts of the river, and we were almost on the edge of the Black Forest when we had to turn back. We found a little tram was running from a village called Neckargemund to Heidelberg, and as we were somewhat weary, having been walking the best part of the day, we were glad of the ride home.

The next day was wet, so after roaming about the town in the rain we boarded a small river boat and saw another view of the Neckar river from the comfortable saloon of the vessel. This was a delightful little trip, notwithstanding the rain. We were interested in a little group of girls who were the only other passengers, with their elderly schoolmaster. They were all bright and intelligent looking, about fourteen years of age. On the return trip the helmsman sang cheerily a German song to the tune of "Sailor, Beware." Later in the evening we went up to the Stadgarten where a good band was playing. The students of the various colleges look very picturesque with the different coloured caps. To reach the Stadgarten from the Hollander Hof the best way is

(Concluded on Page 164.)

# TIME and MONEY



The installation of Royal Typewriters guarantees the saving of time and money. Time, because Royals enable the operators to do more and better work with less effort. Money, because Royals will do more and better work, for a longer time, at less expense.

Compare Royal work—it's the work that counts !

## ROYAL

STANDARD AND PORTABLE  
TYPEWRITERS

LONDON : 75, 75a, Queen Victoria St., E.C.4

(Phone: Royal 7601 (10 lines) ).

PROVINCES : Look in any telephone book

---



# A London Labour Party Problem

The following is a memorandum prepared and submitted by the London Labour Party Executive Committee to a crowded conference of Borough and Divisional Labour Parties held on Thursday, July 4th, under the chairmanship of Mr. T. E. Naylor, J.P., M.P. The Conference was a purely consultative one and accordingly no resolution was voted upon. The memorandum has been reprinted by *The London News*, the organ of the London Labour Party, in the hope that it may receive earnest consideration in the London Movement. It should be understood that the London Labour Party is not committed as to its policy in the matter :—

At our Fifteenth Annual Conference, held on December 1, 1928, the following resolution was adopted :—

That the Executive Committee of the London Labour Party be instructed to report at the next Conference as to the advisability and practicability of the London Labour Party acting as the Borough Labour Party for the whole of the London area.

## LONDON'S SPECIAL PROBLEM.

The problem of affiliations and affiliation fees is exceptionally serious in the County of London. Unlike the provincial Boroughs, London is an aggregation of twenty-nine Parliamentary Boroughs into a solid urban county possessing a more or less common system of Local Government; and the county, is, in reality, a great town.

It is essential, therefore, that in any scheme of political organisation there shall be an efficient organisation in each constituency, both for Parliamentary and Municipal elections; in each Borough, primarily for the purpose of dealing with local Borough Council policy, and for the county as a whole, because of the need for an adequate central London machine capable of standing up to the central machines of the other parties, and also because it is so essential to have an organisation to direct London County Council elections and maintain a Labour Party at County Hall.

## THE QUESTION RAISED.

The Conference resolution raises the question whether Borough Labour Parties in divided Boroughs are not now so much less important than the two other units that the maintenance of the

Borough Labour Parties as units of affiliation has ceased to be necessary.

One of the complications is that our Parliamentary Boroughs (which are co-terminous with Metropolitan Boroughs) do not present identical problems. They may be classified as under :—

### I. — UNDIVIDED PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH RETURNING TWO MEMBERS.

The City of London.

### II. — UNDIVIDED PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH RETURNING ONE MEMBER (9).

Chelsea	Holborn
Deptford	St. Marylebone
Finsbury	Shoreditch
Greenwich	Stoke Newington
Hampstead	

### III. — DIVIDED PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH (19).

With Two Divisions :—

Battersea	Lewisham
Bernmondsey	Paddington
Bethnal Green	Poplar
Fulham	Westminster
Hammersmith	Woolwich
Kensington	

With Three Divisions :—

Hackney	St. Pancras	Southwark
	Stepney	

With Four Divisions :—

Camberwell	Islington	Lambeth
------------	-----------	---------

With Five Divisions :—

Wandsworth

## DIVIDED BOROUGH DIFFICULTIES.

The acute problem is really in the divided Boroughs where there are maintained, in addition to constituency parties, permanent Borough Labour Parties having direct affiliations, frequently dovetailed with the local Trades Council and having regular monthly delegate meetings.

Many of these bodies have a fairly long history and were doing some sort of political work prior to the establishment of constituency Labour Parties under the new constitution of the Labour Party adopted in 1918. This factor of history is one not to be ignored by the reformer, but we are informed it is a factor which in some Boroughs has led to friction between the Borough and constituency Labour Parties. We now proceed to summarise the case of those who urge that a change should be made.

It is urged by many that in practice the bulk of these Borough Parties

cannot and do not accomplish effective electoral work, although they serve in many cases as useful gatherings for the discussion of common problems.

Under the Labour Party Constitution the selection of Parliamentary and municipal candidates is entirely a matter for the constituency Labour Parties, with the reservation that a very restricted power to settle disputes between wards as to municipal candidatures is possessed by the Borough Parties. Sometimes the Borough Parties have assumed the right of having a voice in and/or a veto upon the selection of candidates, but under the Party constitution they have no such rights. These assumed powers have sometimes led to friction.

Difficulties have also arisen from the constitutional claim of the constituency Labour Parties to a share of the affiliation fees received by the Borough Labour Parties.

Apart from (a) the settling of the Borough Council Election Programme and (b) dealing with matters of public policy affecting Borough Council administration, the political functions of the Borough Labour Parties are small. But to be maintained they involve cost, and there is a developing view among the constituency parties that the Borough Labour Parties, as now constituted, are unduly expensive and are unnecessary having regard to the development of the London Labour Party. It is often urged (and, indeed, in Battersea and Lewisham the suggestion has, to some extent, been put into practice) that a Standing Joint Committee for the Borough representative of constituency Labour Parties in divided Boroughs, would be less expensive and far more effective as an instrument of Borough political work; and that thereby a needless unit (involving affiliation fees) would be eliminated to the common advantage of the Labour Movement.

#### INDUSTRIAL AFFILIATIONS.

It has to be remembered that affiliation fees have to be found, though not normally from the political funds of the Unions, for the London Trades Council and certain local Trades Councils, apart from political fees for the London Labour Party and Borough Labour Parties. London Trade Union organisations are, therefore, often faced with the problem of finding sufficient finances for the following affiliations:—

- (a) London Labour Party.
- (b) Borough Labour Party.
- (c) London Trades Council.
- (d) Local Trades Council.

An additional item of political expenditure is occasional grants for specific purposes or in aid of the election expenses of Parliamentary, L.C.C., and Borough Council candidates.

National Executives of Unions in some cases do not understand, and in others do not sympathise with, the exceptional problems of the Metropolis, and the consequence of the numerous affiliations is that all the bodies are short of money and have to spread a limited amount of funds over numerous bodies asking for affiliation fees.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The question is: What can be done (if anything) to simplify the problem of London affiliations?

It is the policy of the Party nationally and in London to consolidate local Trades Councils with Borough Labour Parties, subject to the provisions of the Trade Union Acts of 1913 and 1927.

There remains the real question raised by the Conference resolution, namely, the abolition of the present Borough Labour Parties and the recognition of the London Labour Party as the Borough Labour Party functioning over the Administrative County of London.

The memorandum proceeds to give the objections and advantages to be gained from the suggested change, a matter the "L.O." hopes to refer at a later date, when we will report any steps taken in this matter to our readers.

---

*(Concluded from Page 151.)*

We desire to stimulate youth's interest in political matters, and add appreciably to the great body of workers who are striving to place Labour in power not only in the House of Commons but also in all branches of municipal government.

I shall be happy to give any help possible as will Mr. Windle, who is the secretary of the National Advisory Committee.

Organisers in Lancashire and Yorkshire who are interested could arrange to meet me during the last two weeks in September, as I am visiting Leagues in these counties prior to the Brighton Conference.



## MEETINGS AND METHOD

(Second Article.)

In our previous article (which appeared in the June "L.O.") we had something to say concerning the advertisements and publicity for public meetings. In this article we shall devote ourselves to the conduct of the meetings themselves.

If the advertising has been well done there will be far more halls filled with an audience at the advertised time for commencement than is the case at present. Unpunctuality at meetings is a reflection on our national habits, and all too little is done to remedy the evil. The habit of punctual commencement can be acquired, and is cultivated in some places, with the result that the public turn up to time. But to begin to time where the public have not been taught to expect punctuality calls for something not far short of the heroic. The "Chairman's remarks" might be expected to suffer as a result, but we are not always disposed to account this a loss. When, however, one has chosen a chairman with the idea that he is a "draw," or to do him honour, it seems unfair treatment to submit him to the ordeal of delivering his address in a noisy hall or of beginning the meeting under altogether depressing circumstances.

One can, in such circumstances, fall back on the plan of giving the audience some music. Indeed, wherever possible the quarter-of-an-hour before commencement should be filled up either with Community singing (if there is a big enough audience) or with vocal selections. If vocalists are not obtainable it is well to remember that the pianoforte solo is not specially appreciated and any other form of music may be better.

Inadequate stewarding of meetings is responsible for many evils. An unshepherded audience will invariably be found inconveniently seated. The back seats get filled first, then the fringes around the sides and perhaps the end seats of aisles; when the hall is half full there are almost sure to be big caves, which can only later be filled to the inconvenience of those already seated, and the equal inconvenience of later-comers.

Stewards, therefore, are not to be confined to the doors. People should be shown into their seats and the

audience packed away comfortably just as the removal man fills his pan-technicon. The live agent or secretary is usually to be found moving about in the body of the hall during its filling. At any rate he is better there than in the ante-room with the speakers where everything ought already to be arranged. Even at the smallest meeting the stewards should receive badges. Some men possess peculiar ability for chief stewardship and the Party is lucky which is possessed of three or four men who can be relied upon to take charge of stewarding when required. With some halls a high degree of organising ability is called for in these workers.

At every meeting the chairman wants an agenda. Who has not heard the secretary announce at the last minute "there is only so-and-so to speak — it does not want an agenda"? But it does, if full advantage is to be taken of the fact that a section of the public have come ready to be impressed, not only by the speeches, but by the business qualities of the Party as displayed in the management of even its simplest affairs.

Most visiting speakers will appreciate a time-table and a communication as to the length of time he or she is expected to speak. It is not uncommon for a secretary to imagine a speaker will only require half-an-hour, when the latter has come prepared for a sixty or ninety minutes oration. And on the other hand speakers may sometimes be prepared to do a forty-five or fifty minutes' turn, but not be prepared to carry on for one-and-a-half hours as they are expected to do. Tactful suggestions or enquiry beforehand is desirable, and in all cases the local speakers *must* be made to fit in and adjust themselves to the circumstances.

The practical organiser will use his local speaking resources much as a piece of elastic. He will have speakers who can do ten minutes and no more, and others who can do half-an-hour or more, and he should choose the supplementary speakers from the point of their speaking capacity and that only. The ten-minute speaker often *cannot* expand to half-an-hour without a tragedy, and all too many speakers simply cannot cut their remarks down

to come within the compass of a short address. If speakers cannot, or will not, fit the time-table they should not be chosen.

As we indicated somewhat surreptitiously up above, the chairman is often the first snag at a meeting. The efficient chairman of the Party at delegate meetings is often a dreadful bore and blunderer at public meetings. And it is not always that dapper gentleman which every Party possesses who shines on such occasions, but never does anything else, who is the best individual to invariably trot out to fill the chair. Chairmanship requires training, and the ideal chairman is accommodating and versatile; if he can display a touch of humour without acting the clown so much the better. But though he is master of the meeting after the show has commenced the Chairman must be amenable to the Secretary's instructions regarding the length and matter of his speech and the general conduct of the meeting.

It is not fair to any chairman to introduce him to speakers two or three minutes before the meeting and expect him to out-vie Mark Antony in the eulogy with which he will introduce the visitors. It is the Secretary's business to prime the chairman with whatever information is procurable or necessary for introducing a speaker to an audience. Then there is the superior individual, who always entertains the leading speakers, to remember. The latter all too often lands down with the speaker just before the meeting or perhaps a little later when there is no time to discuss arrangements. There is a better way than that. It is more important to the success of a meeting that the speakers on the platform should meet beforehand and connive together, than that tea may be taken at the posh house.

A word about literature. Leaflets mentioned, and the contents explained, from the platform will be more likely to be taken home and read than if distributed in the ordinary way. We have less faith in decking the walls with the posters of Labour newspapers than in getting one of the speakers to give a puff to same, and on samples or sales being available.

The collection is a matter we have often advised upon, but as there will be more collections yet we will reiterate that the time for the collection is in the middle of the meeting, and

the place for the collection is at every meeting.

But collections can be and are "muffed" to the corresponding loss of the Labour Party exchequer. There should be no shame about the function and it *should* be a function, courageously and thoroughly performed after due announcement and explanation by the chairman. Wherever possible announce the result of the collection to the audience. This has a wonderfully encouraging effect and helps the collection for the next occasion.

There is much more we could say on meetings and method, but we must refer our readers to their files of the *Labour Organiser* for hints we have given in the past. This article has been written to fulfil a promise to the veteran who filled his hall by trapping the audience at the back of his gee-gee up to the platform front. And long may he continue to fill as he now does, the largest halls in his constituency with a cheering and admiring multitude.

## PHOTO BLOCKS

THE BEST HOUSE  
IN THE TRADE

AT REASONABLE PRICES

SPECIMENS FREE

**GRAPHIC ENGRAVERS Ltd.**  
RUPERT STREET, BRISTOL

## LET'S WRITE BETTER COPY.

By W. B. HARGREAVES,  
*Labour Agent, Wrekin, Salop.*

During the last ten years good progress has been made in the printing of Labour's literature *per se*. Much of that improvement has been due to the tireless advocacy of men like the editor of the "L.O." and Mr. Guest of Bromwich, both men who have had considerable experience as practical printers.

Our messages, while not a thing of beauty and a joy forever, are much more inviting in their appearance, and therefore more readable, than they were ten years ago. In one respect, however, our propaganda has improved but little. Our "copy" is very little better than it was.

By copy is meant the printed (and pictorial) portion of our propaganda.



The aim of all good copy is to get action on the part of the reader along the lines desired by the writer. If such action does not sooner or later manifest itself our copy has failed. How long it will take cannot be estimated. But if action doesn't ensue within a reasonable time, there's something wrong with our copy.

Many leaflets leave it to be guessed what action is desired. A few state the action desired, viz., "vote Labour" or "vote for Blank," or "join the Labour Party," in a rather vague way. Some leaflets argue clearly and concisely the case for Labour, but muddle the reaction expected by urging too much. Other leaflets begin by urging action, instead of ending on an urge.

A simple test may guide us here: If we are not *perfectly clear* as to what we desire the reader to do, i.e., if we don't make the invited action as simple and easy as possible, the reader will certainly not do what we desire. In that case our time and money are to a large extent wasted. The coupon, the reply form, the reply envelope, silently but powerfully urge action when a reply is desired. They indicate action.

The hackneyed appeal "vote Labour" has lost much of its action value; simple instructions how to vote for the Labour candidate are much better.

Much of our propaganda fails because it is couched in "we" phraseology instead of "you." There is too much of the second person and too little of the first person—meaning the reader, who is principally interested in himself. The average man is not interested in us. This may sound dreadful, but it's perfectly true. He doesn't want to know anything about us. But he is mightily interested in his own matters.

Let us then write our message in terms of "you" instead of in terms of "us" or "we," thus:—

"You would like to see your town better governed, and with rather more enterprise in its affairs?

"You, too, would like to see more works coming here, creating more employment?

"Of course you would. So would any thinking man."

Depend upon it, propaganda in phraseology like that goes home, and gets the interest and attention of the reader. If the printing is good, he's now well on the way to the action we want.

And now having got the reader's attention and interest, the next step is to create *desire*. This is done by showing how good it is for him (the reader) that he should do what we want—thus:

"Your town can be made more wealthy, pleasanter, more comfortable; first, by encouraging manufacturers to start works here and, secondly, by open spaces, improving roads, developing and improving the water supply, tree planting and similar work.

"Remember that the more works there are here, the greater are your and your friends' prospects of steady employment at good wages.

"The more open spaces, good dwellings, and good roads the healthier and safer your and other's children will be."

We can take it that the reader agrees with us so far, and is now in a frame of mind to accept our advice but for a *doubt* which arises in his mind.

His bump of caution has not yet been reduced. In every man there is this instinct of caution. The orator appeals to it before he comes to the end of his speech. The business man thinks of all the objections against the proposal made to him by the commercial traveller. We had better admit that this "caution" is there, and we shall be well advised to placate it at once.

"Such schemes of course, cost money. We should be foolish if we did not recognise that at once, so we do.

"The cost of them would be . . . which spread out over . . . years, would work out at a twopenny rate.

"At present, without these schemes, we are losing large sums in the preventable ill-health of the children and the inhabitants. Preventable unemployment is a heavy charge on the district, too. The loss of trade due to the lack of enterprise shown by our city fathers, though hypothetical and contingent, is great.

"Any one of these sums is far greater by itself than the twopenny rate we propose."

Having aroused attention, awakened interest, created desire, and satisfied caution, we can proceed to the last stage, that of urging action. The more indirect our suggestion to act, the more likely are we to succeed. The more simple our advice, the better. The easier the action the more sure the

response. Make it simple, make it easy, make it perfectly clear. We have already given an example, so we'll leave it at that.

One last word. We do not claim that good copy will convert everybody. We do not claim that it will build up a large party (collection, employment, facilities, are all parts of that problem) but we claim, in fact we know, that it makes our propaganda much more effective, and it increases our prestige and standing.

Why then continue to dash off leaflets in a hurry? Why not write them according to a known and effective and result-getting plan? Why not link up the poster, and the speech with these ideas, too.

*(Concluded from Page 157.)*

along beautiful Leopold Strasse with the lovely gardens all along the left-hand side, and it was interesting to us, foreigners, to sit on one of the seats in the gardens and watch the people as they went backwards and forwards along this lovely avenue.

The next morning after breakfast we left the town of Heidelberg and caught the train back to Cologne. This was a most enjoyable ride of nearly 200 miles. We had a good and well-served dinner upon the train, and the waiter was again able to speak English. We arrived at Cologne about five o'clock and after booking a comfortable room in a quiet Christian Hospiz we made our way across the fine old bridge to the other side of the Rhine, and entered "Pressa" Exhibition, where we spent the rest of the evening with enormous interest and pleasure.

We discovered that upon the next day there was to be a Special High Festival at the Cathedral, and that all the shops would be closed for the whole day. We were somewhat disappointed, as this was to be the only large city wherein could be seen some good German shops. It had the advantage, however, of leaving us the whole of the day free for sight-seeing, and we proceeded to thoroughly view the town. We went to the fine Botanical Gardens and when weary of walking, went out upon a tram to the famous and beautiful Stadtwold of 480 acres on the edge of the city. Along the tram route to this vast wooded open park, we were very interested to see many large new blocks of flats and a great number of pretty new single

houses. We saw no signs of poverty such as we see in our own cities. The wide well-built thoroughfares with their well-planned apartment houses are attractive and efficient looking. There are a number of old and shabby looking dwellings, but they are rapidly being replaced by the more modern and better equipped type of buildings. We should have been considerably better off with information had we had a guide to explain the histories of some of the old buildings which we came across in our wanderings. However, we had a most enjoyable day and came away with a very fair knowledge of the charm of the city.

The next morning we most regretfully left Cologne by train for Flushing, from whence we crossed to Parkstone in a Dutch boat.

Our trip abroad was ended, only being spoilt by one thing, that is, a lack of knowledge of the language, making it impossible to converse with anyone but each other for twelve days. Apart from this difficulty the memory of the holiday will live with us for a long time, and the pleasure of the trip greatly outshine the difficulties. We can remember the friendliness of the Germans, and the strict honesty of all with whom we had monetary dealings. We could so easily have been cheated wherever we went, but no attempt was made. On the contrary all were kind and helpful; many people going out of their way, indeed, to make things clear and easy for us. We gradually learned a few necessary words and expressions whilst there, and we have firmly made up our minds to another and longer trip to that glorious and friendly country in the near future, with the addition of a better knowledge of their language.

The cost per person, including everything, worked out to £1 per day.

We were impressed with the cleanliness and tidiness of the towns and cities, especially all public conveyances and streets, also with the excellent town planning, which was begun in many instances in medieval times, and has been constantly improved upon. As an instance of the cleanly habits of the people one of us threw down old tram tickets on to the floor of a tram in Cologne. The conductor with a most pained expression, and in a hurt voice, indicated his disapproval and proceeded to pick up every scrap — a most humiliating experience.